

# Bethel Rural Community Organization

## Newsletter

www.bethelrural.org

February 2022

### 2022 BRCO Officers and Board Members

#### Officers

- President: Carol Litchfield
- Vice President : Greg Christopher
- Secretary: Beth Cook
- Treasurer: Mike McLean

#### Board Members::

- Frances Adamson, Vice Chair
- Carol Litchfield
- Lucas Sorrells
- Pat Carr, Chair
- Eleanor Porter



### Message BRCO President, Carol Litchfield



A year ago at this time, we faced an uncertain future and had many questions. Would we be able to provide the same level of service and support that is needed and appreciated by the Bethel Community? Would we be able to adjust to a new way of operating as we watched the whole world convert to new ways of meeting and communicating? Would we be able to have face-to-face meetings once again? Would we be able to attract new members to BRCO?

It's a year later now, and we can all feel a sense of accomplishment and relief that we did just fine in meeting the challenges of the past year—some of which we were not even aware of until late summer when we learned about the devastating impact of the August 17 flood. We established a Flood Relief Fund which currently totals more than \$13,000. The funds are being used to assist those who need help in dealing with flood-related issues. We also addressed an increase in demand for our Food Pantry service and became more efficient in the process. Our many good works during 2021 were acknowledged on December 2nd when we were recognized as one of ten Community Clubs receiving "Best in Class" at the Mountain Laurel level in the WNC Honors Program.

While it has been wonderful meeting in person once again, we have also come to realize that we need to be able to take full advantage of the training and outreach opportunities that are now available to us through Zoom meetings and internet webinars. We are meeting this need by installing internet access in our building along with a large monitor that can be used in the Fellowship Hall by our program speakers and for group training sessions. We hope to have everything fully operational by March.

Inviting people we know to our meetings is a great way to attract new members. I first attended a BRCO meeting back in 2013, because I was sharing information on how the DAR Chapter I was a member of could partner with BRCO on a historic preservation project. Evelyn Coltman was the one who invited me to the meeting. The BRCO members gave me a warm welcome and were supportive of the project (which I appreciated), but what really impressed me most was seeing firsthand how BRCO provided its members with meaningful opportunities to apply their own unique talents and abilities in service to the community. I was hooked and have been ever since. I encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to come to our meetings so that they, too, can witness firsthand what it is like to come together as a community, in service to the community.

Carol Litchfield, President

## 2022 General Meetings

- Tuesday, January 11, 2022
- Tuesday, March 8, 2022
- Tuesday, May 10, 2022
- Tuesday, July 12, 2022
- Tuesday, September 13, 2022
- Tuesday, November 8, 2022



## BRCO Awarded WNC Communities - Mountain Laurel-Best

Each year, the WNC Honors Program recognizes rural community development clubs for their innovative ideas and grassroots solutions. Each club that submits an application receives \$550, and those clubs that earn "Best in Class" at the Mountain Laurel level earn an additional \$500. In recognition of its outstanding accomplishments during 2021, BRCO earned a "Best in Class" award and received a check totaling \$1050.

To all BRCO members who worked so tirelessly to earn the award, CONGRATULATIONS! To Evelyn Coltman for taking on the daunting task of filling out the WNC Honors Program application, THANK YOU!



Evelyn Coltman holds BRCO's "Best in Class" Mountain Laurel Award.

## BRCO's 2021 Tree on the Shelton House Tinsel Trail



The "2021 Shelton House Tinsel Trail" has come to an end! The Shelton House Board of Directors and Staff want to thank all of the sponsors and visitors that contributed to the preservation of the History, Heritage and Crafts of Shelton House either by sponsoring a tree or giving a donation. We also thank all who walked the trail and voted for their favorite tree! All of the trees were sponsored by local businesses, organizations, churches, and individuals! Honorable Mention for 2nd and 3rd place consecutively goes to "BRCO (Bethel Rural Community Organization)" and "Carolina Poodle Rescue". First place this year went to Sarge's Animal Rescue.

## BRCO's Mike McLean elected President of Haywood County Community Development Council



BRCO Treasurer and Past President Mike McLean was elected President of the Haywood County Community Development Council on January 31. The Council is comprised of representatives from all of the Haywood County Community Clubs, including BRCO. Mike is shown here coordinating the Council's meeting schedule with Julie Sawyer, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent.

## BRCO Committee News

### Beautification – Carol Litchfield, Acting Chair

Carol Litchfield has agreed to be acting Chair of the Beautification Committee. She will coordinate with other BRCO members and Committee Chairs and help to address any Fellowship Hall-related issues that arise. If you would like to assist Carol on this Committee or “test the waters” to see if you would like to serve as Beautification Committee Chair in the future, please contact Carol.

Carol is currently working closely with Ted Carr in gathering and analyzing information pertaining to the installation of a new entry door for the Fellowship Hall. The double doors will be replaced by a 42-inch wide single door. Carol asked for and received comments and suggestions on the door from BRCO members in attendance at the January 11 BRCO Meeting and received additional input by e-mail. The new door will benefit our Food Pantry volunteers and others who have experienced frustration in dealing with the old, unwieldy double doors. BRCO has received a generous donation that will cover the cost of purchasing and installing the new door.

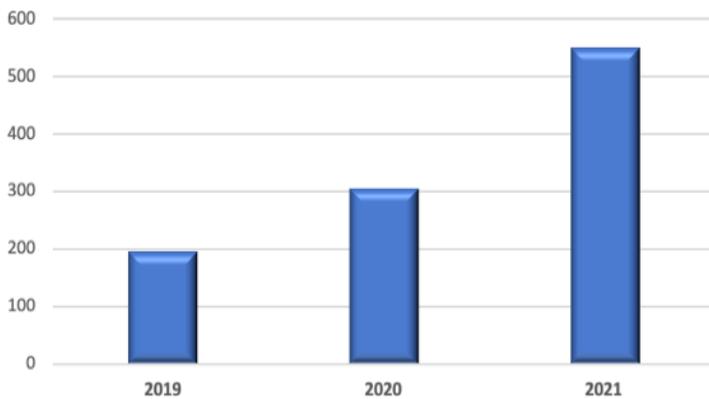


Food Pantry Volunteers pass through the Fellowship Hall entryway countless times each month.

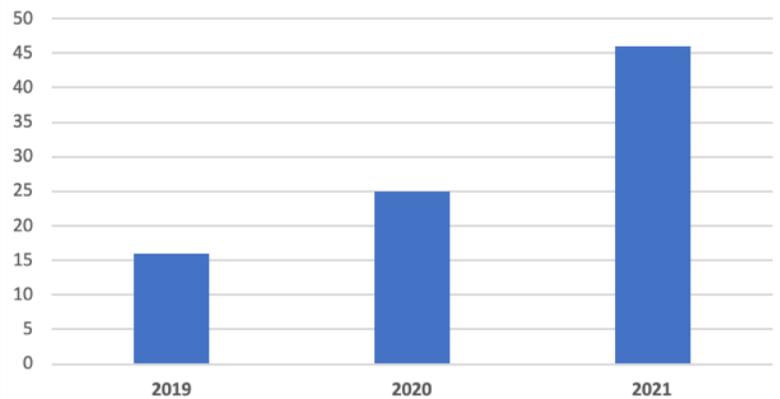
### Food Pantry Committee - Julie Green and Stephanie Quis-Garrett, Co-Chairs

The Food Pantry has seen a significant increase in activity over the last several years. The charts below graphically show the increase in the total number of families served from 2019-2021 and the average number of families served each month for the years 2019-2021.

Number of Families Served



Average Number of Families Served Monthly



**We Need Your Help!**  
**YOUR OPINION MATTERS!**

The BRCO Officers and Board would like to hear from you. We want to have programs at our general meeting that will be of interest to our members. Let us know what speakers you would like to hear, what topics are of interest to you and any other suggestions you might have for programs. Email your suggestions to our secretary at [ehc78@bellsouth.net](mailto:ehc78@bellsouth.net) and your suggestions will be shared with the BRCO officers and board members.

## BRCO Committee News (continued)

### Rural Preservation – Carol Litchfield, Chair

The Rural Preservation Committee is exploring new ways of reaching out to residents in the Bethel area, including those in remote locations. The Committee members plan to utilize Rural Route mailings and also enlist the help of local churches in hopes of connecting with residents who have an interest in learning more about BRCO programs and volunteer opportunities.

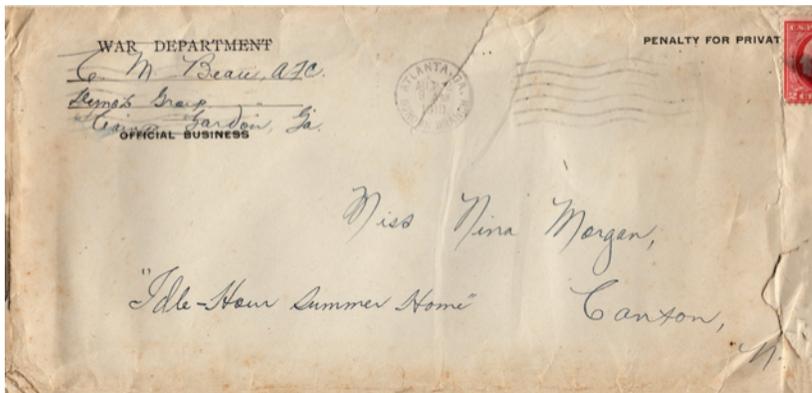
### Historic Preservation Chair - Evelyn Coltman

Sewah Studios in Ohio shipped the historic marker for the 1891 Truss Bridge #79, NC's oldest metal truss bridge and the only NC truss bridge that contains decorative elements. Its unique Phoenix column construction makes this bridge rare nationally. Thanks to Appalachian Antique Hardwoods and supervisor, Tracy Hargrove, for assisting with unloading and storing the 239-pound marker. Hargrove has a special connection to the bridge since his grandfather, Rufus Hargrove, was a member of the Bethel team who transferred the bridge from its original setting (1891) downstream from today's Jukebox Junction to the current location (1925) on Lake Logan Road. Hargrove's father, Troy Hargrove, was the presenter for our *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us* DVD, in which he gave a history of the bridge. Ted Carr, Historic Preservation Committee member and Buildings & Grounds chair will oversee installation of signage later this spring. This historic signage will be BRCO's sixth local historic marker.

The Idle Hour Hotel (sometimes referred to as the Idle Hour Summer Home) previously unknown to the Historic Preservation Committee, was a historic retreat that no longer exists in Bethel. It was located on Evans Road on a hill behind Osborne Boundary Oak. Research reveals that the gathering place existed as early as 1907 and as late as 1919, according to available documentation). We have a photo of the building as well as a copy of an envelope addressed from C.M. Beall to Miss Nina Morgan at Idle Hour Summer Home dated 1919. (See photos below) Dancing and games, music and singing occupied the guests who came from as far away as New Orleans and Charlotte.

- Following is a description of amenities in a July 30, 1916, Asheville newspaper:

*Boarders Wanted – Spend your vacation at the New Idle Hour summer home; newly furnished throughout with modern conveniences; large airy rooms; hot and cold water; excellent table and ideal home on the farm. Conveniently located on an elevation in a large oak grove, in the beautiful Pigeon river valley; only 3-4 mile from a railroad station; 20 miles from Asheville, N.C., and 7 miles from Waynesville. Fine mountain scenery. Fishing and bathing in the beautiful Pigeon river, running through premises. (continued on page 5)*



## BRCO Committee News (continued)

We learned about the hotel by attending a Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society meeting, at which individuals shared pieces of information about Haywood County history. Thanks to Jewell Beall for loaning us the photo and her scrapbook that contained items concerning Bethel history. If anyone has more information about the Idle Hour, please contact Historic Preservation Committee chair, Evelyn Coltman (evelyn3226@charter.net).

Additions to the Bethel Writers section of our website include the following:

- Bethel United Methodist Church history from 1986-1996. Thanks to Evelyn Edwards Lanning for giving us a copy.
- Bethel Methodist Church's Women's Society of Christian Services *Bethel's Best Recipes*, published in 1950.
- Lori Thompsen, BRCO member, is also an author with the following publications: *Designing Corsages and Bouts*, *Designing Romantic Bouquets*, *Designing with Garden Flowers*, "Seven Weeks in Low Country" (a short story), and two children's books: *Ellie Has a Happy Belly* and *Walks with Angel*.

Reproductions of the pastel painting of the Blanton Reece Log Cabin by artist Janice Swanger is now available for purchase on BRCO's website. The cabin is believed to be Haywood County's oldest standing log structure (1821) and is located on Lake Logan Road beyond Lake Logan and before Sunburst Campground. (Pictured left to right are Historic Preservation Committee members Carol Litchfield, Ted Carr, Evelyn Coltman, and Frances Adamson.



**Benevolence Committee - Lucas Sorrells, Chair** - The committee has not received any requests for heating/electrical assistance; however, it is usually February when these requests come in. To date, \$17,076 has been donated to the Flood Relief fund and \$3,278 has been paid out though December. If anyone knows a family or individual that we could help, please send Lucas an email and the committee can discuss.

**Education Chair – Lucas Sorrells** –\$500 was presented to each of the schools for Christmas gifts. The BRCO Scholarship application will be distributed to Pisgah High School, Haywood Early College with a deadline for receiving applications the end of March 2022.

## WI-FI NOW AVAILABLE AT BRCO'S FACILITY

At the BRCO January meeting the board recommended to the membership that Wi-Fi be installed at our facility. The membership agreed. After discussions with AT&T and Spectrum, Spectrum was selected. Spectrum waived their \$100 installation fee and the monthly rates are about the same - \$80/month for 200Mbps. Money was budgeted in the 2022 budget for this expense. The installation of internet, phone, and Wi-Fi was scheduled for February 1, 2022.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

In each newsletter this year, we will be spotlighting one of In each newsletter this year we will be spotlighting one of BRCO's officers, board members, and/or committee chairs. Hopefully this will allow our members to get to know more about our BRCO leaders. This month's spotlight is on the chair of BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee—Evelyn Coltman. (see page 6)

## SPOTLIGHT ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE CHAIR - Evelyn Coltman

- Family were early residents of Jackson County who moved to Haywood with the logging industry on the East Fork of the Pigeon River (Jackson Log and Lumber – Powell family) in the late 1920s
- Grandparents, Joe Berry and Rose Rigdon, operated the J.B. Rigdon General Store across the road from Bethel School from the late 1930s-1960s.
- Daughter of Kin and Win McNeil - family-owned Southern School Service that sold school equipment throughout North Carolina. Born in Bethel, attended Bethel Elementary, and graduated from Bethel High School in 1964
- Graduated summa cum laude from Brenau College in Gainesville, Georgia, 1967, taught language arts and social studies at Bethel Middle School for two years, and received an MA in English at the University of Tennessee in 1971.
- Married Richard Coltman in 1970 - parents to Amber Coltman Morgan (Carroll) who is a nursing home administrator and Dr. Kinneil Coltman (Mark) who is a Vice-President at Atrium Health in Charlotte
- Three grandchildren: Madison Morgan, Trey Morgan, and Sayla Haddad
- Richard and Evelyn were owners of Signal & Communications which became Sigcom that was purchased by Anteon and then General Dynamics
- One of five founders of Haywood Animal Welfare Association (now Haywood Spay/Neuter) and served as a board member/chair of the Buildings & Grounds Committee of the Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House in Waynesville.
- Worked as a natural products consultant at Zoolie's Natural Food Market in Waynesville for sixteen ½ years with training in herbals, supplements, naturopathy, and homeopathy
- Member of Bethel Baptist Church
- Attended a few meetings of the original Bethel Community Organization (BCO) and participated in Pigeon Valley Citizens for Rural Preservation until BCO and the Pigeon Valley group merged in the early 2000s to become Bethel Rural Community Organization
- As chair of BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee, Evelyn has overseen the committee's receiving six state history awards from the NC Society of Historians for the 6 books she wrote and edited, *Legends, Tales & History of Cold Mountain*, three DVDs: *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us*, *From New College to Springdale*, *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region*, and an award for the historic art print collection as well as one of five special awards: Lighthouse Award. The committee has also produced the *Cold Mountain Heritage Driving Tour CD* and *Sunburst Sessions: Possum on a Whale* musical CD.



Evelyn is so appreciative of BRCO and its members and leaders for the many accomplishments that benefit the community, including the following: maintenance of the historic building that serves as a community center, our benevolence and educational programs, our food pantry that has proven instrumental in helping local citizens during times of need, our historic preservation efforts that continue to collect and document Bethel history, our rural preservation programs that honor the legacy of the agrarian heritage of our area, the thousands of hours of work involved with our fundraisers such as the 5K/Half Marathon Race that have sustained the organization. Our patrons have been instrumental in allowing our work to continue to nurture and preserve the community.

Our chief obstacle is in securing new energy and bodies who are willing to step out of their comfort zone to ensure that our work continues.